

PROPOSED ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE PROGRAM REGULATIONS

1.00 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

1.01 These regulations are enacted pursuant to the authority of the State Board of Education's authority under Act 212 of 1991 as amended.

1.02 The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Department of Human Services, shall coordinate and administer the Arkansas Better Chance Program, providing all appropriate technical assistance and program monitoring necessary to fulfill the requirements of Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-45-101 et seq., 20-78-206 and 6-11-105. The Division will annually provide the State Board of Education a list of grants which are recommended for funding for the next program year.

1.03 The State Board of Education will approve all rules and regulations developed pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-45-101 et seq. as amended and will approve all grants funded under the Arkansas Better Chance Program.

2.00 PURPOSE

2.01 It is the purpose of these regulations to set the general guidelines for the operation of early childhood programs funded under the Arkansas Better Chance Program.

3.00 DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS

3.01 ABC: Arkansas Better Chance

3.02 ADE: Arkansas Department of Education

3.03 ADHS: Arkansas Department of Human Services

3.04 Core Components: The five key areas of ABC (1. Low student to teacher ratio/well qualified/compensated staff 2. Professional development 3. Developmental Screening 4. Meaningful parent and community engagement activities 5. Proven Curricula and learning processes) which serve as the base of ABC funding levels.

3.05 DCCECE: Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

3.06 IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Act

3.07 In-kind services: Support services provided at either no cost or without monetary exchange

3.08 HIPPY: Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

3.09 LEA: Local Education Agency

3.10 PAT: Parents as Teachers

3.11 Single Site Classroom: One ABC classroom at a geographic location

3.12 Multi-classroom Site: Multiple ABC classrooms which are located on the same premises (This does not refer to a grantee which has multiple classrooms in various geographic locations.)

3.13 Shall: Mandatory standard

3.14 Should: Standard is recommended but not mandatory

4.00 STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

4.01 This program is intended to serve educationally deprived children, ages birth-5 years, excluding the required kindergarten program.

4.02 Eligible students shall have at least one of the following characteristics: low income family based on current state child care eligibility income scale, parents without a high school diploma or GED, low birth weight (below 5 pounds, 9 ounces), a teen parent at child's birth, a family with a history of substance abuse/addiction, be income eligible for Title I programs, be eligible for services under IDEA, a family with a history of abuse or neglect or be a victim of abuse or neglect, demonstrable developmental delays as identified through an appropriate screening, Limited English Proficient.

5.00 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

5.01 Any non-profit program which meets the criteria herein and provides a local-to-state matching ratio of forty (40) to sixty (60) may qualify for consideration and funding.

5.02 Applicants must provide proof of non-profit status prior to consideration for funding.

5.03 Local 40% match may include funding or appropriate in-kind services. Federal funding sources, including the cost of EPSDT screening, may be used as local match.

5.04 Arkansas Better Chance Funding (60%) for the core components of the program may include salaries and fringe for staff giving direct services to ABC children, professional development, developmental screening, meaningful parent and community engagement activities and proven curricula and learning processes.

6.00 FUNDING

6.01 The Arkansas Better Chance Program is intended to supplement existing funding sources rather than to supplant existing sources.

6.02 All applications shall include an appropriate budget which details all costs associated with the program and demonstrates both the cost effectiveness of the program and the use of federal, state, local and/or private funds in conjunction with ABC grant monies.

6.03 Allowable costs include, salaries and fringe benefits, instructional materials, instructional equipment, developmental screenings, staff development, meaningful parent and community engagement activities, and stipends for staff working toward a degree or credential.

6.04 Funding, not to exceed 2% of the total ABC funding pool, shall be available from the ABC monies for the additional support services required of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, in administering, monitoring, and evaluating the ABC program.

6.05 Funding recommendations will be based but not limited to the following criteria: economic status of a service area (free and reduced lunch), remediation percentages by school district, availability of services in a community/area, and a reader's review of the proposal to determine if the program can provide a developmentally appropriate pre-school program.

7.00 REPORTING

7.01 Each ABC grantee shall submit to the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education an annual financial expenditure and program report as specified by the Division.

7.02 An annual full final disclosure audit of the ABC Program is required and must be submitted for review to the DCCECE. LEA's/ESC may submit the summary completed by Legislative Audit. The audit shall be submitted within 120 days of the program's fiscal year completion.

7.03 Programs shall submit additional reports as required, including annual data forms and quarterly reports on participating children.

7.04 Failure of timely submission of required reports will result in non release of funds.

8.00 APPLICATION/RENEWAL APPLICATION

8.01 The request for proposal and renewal application will specify all application procedures for an ABC program.

8.02 If all ABC monies are not allocated or expended during any program year, the DCCECE may initiate an additional Request for Proposal to fully obligate all available funds.

9.00 MINIMUM STANDARDS/CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

9.01 All ABC classroom programs shall satisfy the requirements specified in "The Child Care Licensing Act," Ark. Code Ann. 20-78-201 through 221 and Supplements and rules and

regulations enacted pursuant to these sections.

9.02 All ABC classrooms shall maintain a license in good standing as referenced in Section 9.01.

9.03 The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, the Department of Human Services, is directly responsible for the inspection and evaluation of programs as referenced in Section 9.01.

9.04 All ABC classrooms shall meet the criteria for becoming an "approved" Early childhood program under the Arkansas Child Care Approval System rules and regulations, Ark. Code Ann. 6-45-103 (Supp. 1993). An overall average of 5.5 (with a minimum of 4.5 in each sub-scale) is required for the Environmental Rating Scale or scales that are applicable to each program.

9.05 ABC grantees which fail to meet the standards as set forth in these rules and regulations may be denied renewal funding.

9.06 All ABC programs shall provide a minimum of 178 instructional days per year and 7.5 hours per day with a minimum of seven hours with the children.

10.00 STAFF/PUPIL RATIO/CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

10.01 The group size in a classroom shall not exceed:

8 children ages birth-18 months

14 children ages 18 months-3 years

20 children ages 3-5 years

10.02 The adult-to-child ratio in the classroom shall not exceed:

1:4 (birth to 18 months)

1:7 (18 months-3 years)

1:10 (3 years-5 years)

10.03 Full staffing is required at all times for infant and toddlers. A minimum of 50% of the staff will remain in the classroom during rest time for 3-5 years old.

11.00 STAFF QUALIFICATIONS/CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

11.01 Minimum Qualifications/Classroom/Lead Teacher: The lead teacher shall hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree in early childhood education, elementary education, special education with an early childhood P-4 license or in Family and Consumer Science with an emphasis in child development. Teachers must be able to demonstrate competency in the areas of developmentally appropriate programming, curriculum development and daily classroom management.

11.02 Minimum Qualifications/Classroom Teacher of second classroom (multiple classrooms sites). The teacher shall hold an Associate Arts degree in early childhood education. Teachers must be able to demonstrate competency in the areas of developmentally

appropriate programming, curriculum development and daily classroom management. Teachers employed prior to July 1, 2002 who hold a CDA, may submit a plan to attain the AA degree for approval by DCCECE.

11.03 Minimum Qualifications/Paraprofessional Aide: The paraprofessional aide shall hold a minimum of one of the following:

- * Associate of Arts or Associate of Sciences degree in early childhood development
- * Child Development Associate credential and any additional requirements of A D E

11.04 All teachers as defined in section 11.01 shall meet the new early childhood licensure requirements for the P-4 licensure within 2 years of adoption by the ADE to be mandated January 1, 2002. Teachers who hold a K-6 licensure are exempt from P-4 licensure requirements.

11.05 If programs hire staff not initially qualified under sections 11.01 and 11.02, deficiency removal plans shall be submitted to the DCCECE, to include time frames within which deficiencies will be removed and a plan to monitor the employee's progress. Teachers must have a minimum of a college degree but may work toward completion of the early childhood P-4 licensure under an additional licensure plan. These plans must be approved by the DCCECE.

11.06 ABC staff should reflect the ethnic diversity of the children participating in the ABC program.

11.07 Lead teachers/teachers shall be required to participate in thirty (30) hours of staff development annually on topics pertinent to early childhood education. Persons who are obtaining an early childhood degree may count college course hours toward the required hours of staff development.

11.08 Paraprofessional aides shall be required to participate in twenty (20) hours of staff development annually on topics pertinent to early childhood education.

12.00 STAFFING PATTERNS/CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

12.01 Single classroom sites shall have a teacher qualified under section 11.01 and a paraprofessional aide qualified under section 11.03.

12.02 In ABC sites which are funded for multi-classroom sites, the following staffing patterns are acceptable:

- A. Two classrooms
 - * Lead teacher qualified under section 11.01.
 - * Classroom teacher qualified under section 11.02.
 - * Two (2) paraprofessional aides qualified under section 11.03.
- B. Three classrooms
 - * Lead teacher qualified under section 11.01.
 - * Two (2) teachers qualified under section 11.02.

- * Three (3) paraprofessional aides qualified under section 11.03.
- C. Four classrooms
 - * Two (2) teachers qualified under section 11.01.
 - * Two (2) teachers qualified under section 11.02.
 - * Four (4) paraprofessional aides qualified under section 11.03.

Lead teachers in this staffing configuration are responsible for curriculum and program planning and oversight of paraprofessional aides.

13.00 PROGRAM STANDARDS

13.01 All early childhood programs funded by ABC monies shall be developmentally appropriate and individualized to meet the needs of each student enrolled. Guidelines published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework will be used to determine developmental appropriateness. (Bredekamp, Sue, Editor, Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8).

13.02 Each program shall be equipped with toys, books and play apparatus to take care of the needs of the total group and to provide each child with a variety of activities through the day. A variety of this equipment shall be accessible from low shelves to the children of all ages and shall be arranged in learning centers.

13.03 The program shall be individualized to meet the needs of each student enrolled. Each curriculum model and the actual classroom practice will be assessed using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale or the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (Clifford/Harms) to ensure the model is developmentally appropriate.

13.04 The program shall have a written over-all curriculum plan which is arranged in thematic units and includes goals and objectives related to the following:

- * Social/Emotional development
- * Creative/Aesthetic learning
- * Cognitive/Intellectual learning
- * Physical development
- * Language

13.05 The curriculum shall be supported by developmentally appropriate materials that encourage hands-on manipulation of real objects (manipulative). Approved curriculum models are:

- The Arkansas Early Childhood Framework (Infant & Toddler and Three & Four Year Old)
- Bank Street
- Core Knowledge
- Creative Curriculum
- High Reach
- High Scope
- Montessori
- Other DCCECE approved curriculum in which learning is achieved through the use of appropriate material and learning centers with a variety of materials, books, blocks, games, and science materials. Art, music and movement are incorporated into the instructional day
- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
- Parents As Teachers (PAT)

13.06 Children shall participate in a daily schedule that reflects a balance among the following types of activities:

- Indoor/Outdoor
- Quiet/Active
- Individual/Small Group/Large Group
- Gross Motor/Fine Motor
- Child Initiated/Teacher Initiated

13.07 Routine and transition times throughout the day, such as preparing for mealtime, shall be used as opportunities for incidental learning. Transition times shall be planned to avoid frequent disruption of children's activities and long waits between activities.

13.08 Programs shall implement and maintain individual child portfolios. Portfolios shall contain the following:

- A. Documentation of eligibility for ABC
- B. Application form which includes basic child information
- C. Emergency information, including non-parental emergency contact and medical information
- D. Parental authorization for medical care & daily pick-up
- E. Field trip authorization
- F. Immunization/health record
- G. Record of health/developmental assessment
- H. Samples of children's work, teacher & parent observations

13.09 Discipline shall reflect positive guidance, be consistent and individualized for each child. It shall be appropriate to the child's level of understanding and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self control. Corporal punishment is an unacceptable method of discipline for children in ABC funded programs and shall not be used.

13.10 The arrangement of indoor and outdoor equipment, materials and interest areas for each group shall provide for:

- A. Accessibility to equipment and materials so that children may select and return them easily
- B. An orderly, uncluttered atmosphere
- C. Visual and/or auditory supervision of children in all areas
- D. Separation of active and quiet play areas
- E. Traffic patterns that avoid disruption of activities

13.11 Developmentally appropriate equipment and materials of sufficient quantity to accommodate a sustained learning environment shall be provided in the following interest areas/learning centers:

- A. Blocks
- B. Dramatic Play
- C. Manipulative
- D. Stories/Language Development
- E. Music

- F. Art
- G. Discovery/Science/Sensory
- H. Sand/Water Play

13.12 The outdoor play area shall be used for extension of the learning activities which occur in the classroom.

13.12 The outdoor play area shall be developmentally appropriate and meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission standards for outdoor play areas. The outdoor play area shall provide the following:

- A. A variety of surfaces
- B. An arrangement designed for appropriate flow of activities
- C. Climbing and other active play items and structures
- D. Open areas for running and games
- E. Opportunities for dramatic play
- F. Adequate storage for equipment and materials
- G. Partial shade
- H. Quiet, private spaces
- I. A separate outdoor area equipped for infants and toddlers (if applicable)

13.14 Provision should be made through program design and networking efforts to ease the transition of children moving from one program or age grouping to another or to public school kindergartens.

13.15 Children qualified as eligible for ABC services under Section 4.02 may not be required to pay for meals/snacks. Grantees are required to provide free meals/snacks for all ABC eligible children. If non-ABC eligible children are mixed in a classroom with ABC eligible children, they may be required to bear the cost of service.

13.16 Children qualified as eligible for ABC services under Section 4.02 shall not pay any fees during ABC program hours. This will include enrollment fees, field trip fees, etc.

14.00 DEVELOPMENTAL/HEALTH SCREENING

14.01 Children shall receive a comprehensive health and developmental screen to determine their individual needs and for the development of programs. The assessment methodology must be developmentally appropriate. A nationally standardized group test will not fulfill this requirement.

14.02 Developmental screening must include at least the following areas:

- * vocabulary
- * visual-motor integration
- * language and speech development
- * fine and gross motor skills
- * social skills.
- * developmental milestones

The purpose of screening is to identify developmental delays and/or educational deficiencies.

Appropriate referrals shall be made if children require additional assessment.

14.03 The following developmental screenings are suggested:

Battelle	Early Screening Profile
Brigance	Early Screening Inventory
Denver II	IDEA (Individual Development Educational Assessment)
Dial-R	LAP (Learning Accomplishment Profile)
Dial III	NCLD (National Center for Learning Disabilities) Screening for 3-5 year olds
EPSF (Early Prevention of School Failure)	Pre-K Success Assessment for 3 through 5 year olds

14.04 A comprehensive health screening for ABC children shall include the following components:

A. Basic screening

1. Growth and nutrition
2. Development assessment
3. Unclothed physical
 - a. Neurological exam
 - b. Cardiac status
4. Vision
5. Hearing
6. Teeth
7. Lab tests (Appropriate for age & population group)
 - a. Hematological
 - b. Urinalysis

B. Immunization status

Personnel certified to provide the health screen may include the Arkansas Department of Health and certified school health personnel. Children who access private health care may produce documentation from that provider that these services are routinely being provided and that the child does not need further screening. A waiver from this requirement may be granted under Ark. Code Ann. §6-19-702 (Repl. 1993).

14.05 Children shall be age appropriately immunized to attend an ABC program. A waiver from this requirement may be granted under Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-702 (Repl. 1993).

15.00 PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

15.01 Each program shall have a plan for parent involvement which includes opportunities for parental input into program operation and design. Parent involvement plans shall include a mechanism for parental advice and review of programmatic plans, parent conferences and a method to involve the parent in the child's educational experience.

15.02 The program shall have an "open door" policy for parents which encourages visiting and participation in classroom activities.

15.03 The program shall have a parent handbook.

15.04 Each program shall have a plan for community/agency involvement which includes a description of how cooperation with other service providers who are concerned with the education, welfare, and health and safety needs of young children will be established and maintained. Programs should consider providing opportunities for community representatives to participate in the educational activities of the classroom.

16.00 TRANSPORTATION

16.01 Any child who is less than 6 years old and weighs less than 60 pounds shall be restrained in a child passenger safety seat. Any child who is at least 6 years or weighs at least 60 pounds must be restrained by a safety belt. (Ark. Code Ann. § 27-34-104). Conventional school busses are exempt from this requirement except for the transportation of infants/toddler.

16.02 Infants and toddlers shall not be transported on school buses that are not equipped to accommodate required child safety seats.

16.03 If ABC children are transported on public school buses, the program shall have a plan for the following:

- * Escorts to and from the bus pick-up area
- * A visual identification method for buses and children to ensure children get on the correct bus
- * A plan for "partnering" each child with an adult or older child on the bus
- * A thematic unit on bus safety to be presented to the children in the ABC preschool classroom at the beginning of each program year

17.00 ALTERNATE PROGRAM MODELS

17.01 Alternate programs may include, but not be limited to, Head Start/Home Based, Parents as Teachers (PAT), HIPPY and summer transition programs. These programs will comply, where applicable, to the regulations herein.

17.02 All ABC funded alternate program models will be developmentally appropriate, meet applicable health and safety standards, provide developmental and health screenings and ensure immunization of the child served.

18.00 HIPPY REGULATIONS

18.01 HIPPY programs shall meet program criteria as outlined in the contractual agreement signed by each site with HIPPY USA.

18.02 Each HIPPY program serving at least 150 families must have one (1) full-time professional coordinator. Minimum qualifications for coordinator include a bachelor's degree in education, social work, sociology, psychology, or related field. Those coordinators without a related degree must obtain at least 12 college course hours per year. The HIPPY Coordinator shall meet additional job requirements as described in the HIPPY USA Coordinator job description.

18.03 HIPPY Home Based Educators who work 20-24 hours per week may not serve more than 15 families; Home Based Educators who work 25-30 hours may not serve more than 25 families and Home Based Educators working 40 hours per week may not serve more than

30 families. Minimum requirements for home educators include a high school diploma/GED and a current CDA certificate. Home Based Educators employed prior to July 1, 2002 have two years to attain the CDA Home Visitor Credential.

18.04 HIPPY programs may serve children age 3 upon approval by the DCCECE and Arkansas State HIPPY Office.

18.05 The Arkansas HIPPY Training and Technical Assistance Office will monitor and assist HIPPY programs throughout the state. Annual program site reviews and assessments will be forwarded to the Division for consideration of program compliance and funding renewal. The Arkansas HIPPY T & TA Office will assist the Division with determining program compliance at the local level.

18.06 HIPPY programs shall meet requirements as set forth in the following sections: Section 4.00; Section 5.00; Section 6.00; Section 7.00; Section 14.00; Section 15.00 and Section 16.00.

18.07 Group meetings should reflect the educational programming standards as set forth in section 13.00 and guidelines set forth in the HIPPY model.

18.08 Any enhancements designed to complement the HIPPY curriculum must be approved by the Arkansas HIPPY T & TA Office prior to implementation with families.

19.00 PARENTS AS TEACHERS REGULATIONS

19.01 PAT Programs shall meet program criteria as outlined in the Parents As Teachers Program Implementation and Planning Guide.

19.02 All new PAT Coordinators must attend the PAT Institute Training and obtain either a Parent Educator Certificate or an Administrator's Certificate.

19.03 Each program must have at least two Parent Educators. One Parent Educator may also serve as Coordinator.

19.04 PAT Parent Educators working on a part-time basis (20 hours per week) should serve 30 and not more than 40 children and their families.

19.05 PAT Programs shall operate on a twelve month, year-round basis. Families must be offered twelve personal visits and six parent group meetings.

19.06 PAT Programs may serve children from the prenatal period through five years of age with proper certification.

19.07 PAT Programs must coordinate services with HIPPY Programs where both exist in the same community to avoid duplication of services.

19.08 PAT Programs shall meet requirements as set forth in the following sections: Section 4.000; Section 5.00; Section 6.00; Section 7.00; Section 14.00; Section 15.00 and Section 16.00.

20.00 SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAMS

20.01 ABC summer transition programs are designed to assist children with transition into the public school kindergarten. Priority shall be given to children who have not had a previous pre-school experience.

20.02 Summer transition programs must be provided on a public school campus to acclimate the children to the school campus. Preferably, the grantee will utilize the kindergarten classrooms which the children will be attending in the fall.

20.03 Staff for the ABC summer transition programs are required to meet the P-4 licensure.

20.04 Activities conducted in this program shall be developmentally appropriate and meet the standards as outlined in Section 13.00.

20.05 Summer transition programs will not be required to meet Section 9.01 of the ABC standards.

20.06 Summer transition programs shall meet the following selected ABC standards: Section 10.00; Section 13.00; Section 14.00; and Section 16.00.